

## **REMARKS**

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-6 and 9-13 remain in the application. Claims 7 and 8 have been canceled. All of the claims remaining in the application have been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, the elimination of the numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Additionally, claim 6 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 7 and 8. Claim 9 has been amended to depend from claim 6. Claim 11 has been amended into independent form and claim 12 has been amended to depend from claim 11. In this latter regard, the original dependency of claim 12 from claim 10 is believed to have been a mistake.

The applicants and the assignee are pleased to note that claims 1-5 were allowed as filed. Those claims remain in the application and have not been amended substantively.

The Examiner rejected claims 6 and 7 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,089,438 to Suzuki et al. Claim 13 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Suzuki et al. However, the Examiner identified claims 8-12 as being directed to patentable subject matter. The Examiner indicated that each of these claims would be allowed if amended or written into independent form.

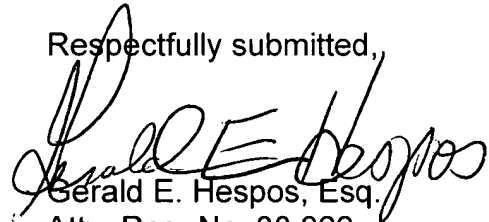
Allowable claim 8 had depended from claim 7, which in turn depended from independent claim 6. Claim 6 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 7 and allowable claim 8. Hence, amended claim 6 is believed to be in condition for

allowance. Claims 9, 10 and 13 depend from claims 6 and hence should be allowed as well.

Allowable claim 11 had depended directly from independent claim 6. Claim 11 has been rewritten in independent form with all of the limitations of claim 6. Accordingly, amended claim 6 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 12 depends from claim 11 and should be allowed as well.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter and allowance is solicited. As a result, the Examiner is urged to issue a Notice of Allowance. Please contact applicant's attorney at the number below if there are any other issues that need to be resolved.

Respectfully submitted,



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